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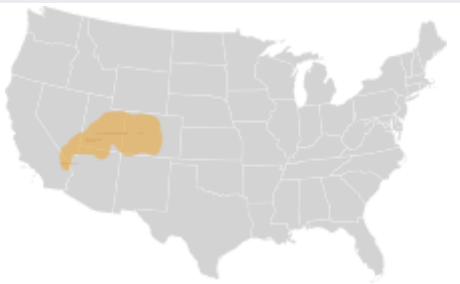
Colorado River Numic language

Colorado River Numic (also called **Ute** /ˈjuːt/, **Southern Paiute** /ˈpaɪjuːt/, **Ute–Southern Paiute**, or **Ute-Chemehuevi** /tʃɛmɪˈweɪvi/), of the Numic branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family, is a dialect chain that stretches from southeastern California to Colorado.[3] Individual dialects are Chemehuevi, which is in danger of extinction, Southern Paiute (Moapa, Cedar City, Kaibab, and San Juan subdialects), and Ute (Central Utah, Northern, White Mesa, Southern subdialects). According to the *Ethnologue*, there were a little less than two thousand speakers of Colorado River Numic Language in 1990, or ca. 40% out of an ethnic population of 5,000.[4]

The Southern Paiute dialect has played a significant role in linguistics, as the background for a famous article by linguist Edward Sapir and his collaborator Tony Tillohash on the nature of the phoneme.[5]

Colorado River Numic	
Southern Paiute	
Native to	United States
Region	Nevada, California, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico
Ethnicity	6,200 Chemehuevi, Southern Paiute and Ute (2007)[1]
Native speakers	920 (2007)[1] 20 monolinguals (1990 census)[1]
Language family	Uto-Aztecan ▪ Numic ▪ Southern Numic ▪ **Colorado River Numic**
Dialects	Chemehuevi Southern Paiute Ute
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	ute
Glottolog	utes1238 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/utes1238)[2]



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Dialects

The three major dialect groups of Colorado River are Chemehuevi, Southern Paiute, and Ute, although there are no strong isoglosses. The threefold division is primarily one of culture rather than strictly linguistic. There are, however, three major phonological distinctions among the dialects:

- In Southern Paiute and Ute, initial /h/ has been lost: Chemehuevi /hipi/ 'drink', other dialects /ipi/ 'drink'.
- In Ute, nasal-stop clusters have become voiceless geminate stops: Ute /pukku/ 'horse, pet', other dialects /puŋku/.

- In Ute, the mid back round vowel /o/ has been fronted to /ö/: Ute /söö-/ 'lungs', other dialects /soo-/.

There are no strong isoglosses between Southern Paiute and Ute for the changes but an increasing level of change, as one moves from Kaibab Southern Paiute (0% of nasal-stop clusters have changed) to Southern Ute (100% of nasal-stop clusters have changed).

Phonology

Consonant and vowel charts for the westernmost and easternmost dialects are given.[6][7]

Consonants

Consonant phonemes in Chemehuevi dialect

	labial	dental	palatal	velar	glottal
stop	p	t	ts	k, kʷ	ʔ
voiceless fricative		s			h
tap/flap		ɾ			
voiced fricative	β			ɣ, ɣʷ	
nasal	m, mˀ	n, nˀ		ŋ, ŋˀ, ŋʷ	
glide	w, wˀ		j, jˀ		

Consonant phonemes in Southern Ute dialect

	labial	dental	palatal	velar	glottal
stop	p	t	tʃ	k, kʷ	ʔ
voiceless fricative		s			
tap/flap		ɾ			
voiced fricative	β			ɣ, ɣʷ	
nasal	m	n			
glide	w		j		

Vowels

Vowel phonemes in Chemehuevi dialect

	front	central	back-unrounded	back
high	i		ɯ	u
mid				o
low		ɑ		

Vowel phonemes in Southern Ute dialect

	front	front-rounded	central	back-unrounded	back
high	i			ɯ	u
mid		ø			
low			ɑ		

Vowels can be long or short. Short unstressed vowels can be devoiced.

Morphology

The Colorado River Numic language is an agglutinative language, in which words use suffix complexes for a variety of purposes with several morphemes strung together.

References

1. Colorado River Numic (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/ute/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Ute-Southern Paiute" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/utes1238). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Mithun (1999:542)
4. "Ethnologue report for language code:ute" (http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=ute). Ethnologue. Retrieved 2009-06-13.
5. Sapir, Edward (1933). "La réalité psychologique des phonèmes (The psychological reality of phonemes)". *Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique* (in French).
6. Press, Margaret L. (1979). *Chemehuevi: A Grammar and Lexicon*. University of California Press.
7. Givon, T. (2011). *Ute Reference Grammar*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

External links

- A Preliminary Analysis of Southern Ute with a Special Focus on Noun Phrases (https://web.archive.org/web/20070723140802/http://coyotepapers.sbs.arizona.edu/CPXIII/oberly.pdf) - also contains phonology information
- Chemehuevi language (http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~survey/languages/chemehuevi.php) overview at the Survey of California and Other Indian Languages
- A Chemehuevi Language Archive (http://www.chemehuevilanguage.org/) - 1970s Fieldwork and Analysis by Margaret L. Press
- OLAC resources in and about the Ute-Southern Paiute language (http://www.language-archives.org/language/ute)
- Collected Works of Edward Sapir, Vol. X: Southern Paiute and Ute Linguistics and Ethnography (https://archive.org/details/collectedworksof10sapi)
- Ute Dictionary (https://books.google.com/books?id=cKm8CwAAQBAJ&pg=PR11&dq=ute+language+pronunciation&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiQgrznn83RAhWK3YMKHekQAGcQ6AEIJjAC#v=onepage&q&f=false)

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